

HAROLD FRANCIS WILLARD

Biographical Sketch

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Harold Francis Willard, after 25 years of valued service to the community as an officer of the United States Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, died in Honolulu on August 18, 1939. His many friends, business associates and colleagues in Hawaii, Washington, D. C., and elsewhere, will greatly miss him. His wise and firm counsel in the enforcement of the Mediterranean Fruit Fly quarantine laws over a period of many years, has been a source of great satisfaction and benefit to the Hawaiian exporters of fruit and to the fruit growers of California who have needed quarantine protection. Mr. Willard never failed in the fair execution of his duties as quarantine officer and exporters never questioned the justice and wisdom of his decisions.

Mr. Willard was born in Neillsville, Wisconsin, on February 21, 1884. While still a child he was moved to Leominster, Massachusetts, where he spent his boyhood and early youth. He graduated from the Mount Hermon School at Northfield, Massachusetts, in 1907 and entered the Massachusetts Agricultural College, from which he graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science in 1911. He married shortly after graduating and came to Honolulu with his wife the same year to accept a position as teacher of agriculture at the Mid-Pacific Institute. Much to the regret of the faculty and students of this Institute, where he was very popular, he moved to Maui during 1912 to take up a homestead at Haiku. Here he remained for nearly two years, participating with the other homesteaders in the establishment of the pineapple industry in that district.

It was during Mr. Willard's residence at Haiku that the U. S. Bureau of Entomology established an office and laboratory in Honolulu and began investigations of the Mediterranean Fruit Fly and Melon Fly in Hawaii. Dr. E. A. Back, also a graduate of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, was placed in charge of this work and was fortunate in securing the services of Mr. Willard at this office early in 1914. Shortly afterward Mr. Willard passed the necessary Civil Service examinations required for professional rating in the U. S. Bureau and received an appointment from Washington as Assistant Entomologist with headquarters in Honolulu.

In July 1918, Mr. Willard was advanced to the position of Entomologist in Charge of the Station, under which title he served until 1929, when he was further promoted to the position of Senior Entomologist. In this capacity he continued to direct the fruit fly regulatory work in Honolulu until his death.

Mr. Willard's greatest work centered in the prevention of fruit flies reaching California from Hawaii. In this he was highly successful. Throughout the years of his service he rigidly and consistently enforced the fruit fly quarantine regulations. This included the inspection of millions of bunches of bananas and hundreds of thousands of cases of pineapples consigned to California. Mr. Willard and a small number of trusted inspectors, under his watchful eye, always handled this work smoothly and efficiently. There is still no record of the establishment of the Mediterranean Fruit Fly or Melon Fly in California and this may be considered a monument to Mr. Willard and the small group of associates and inspectors who have worked under his direction.

In addition to the large amount of administrative work involved in inspection duties, Mr. Willard also participated, in a large measure, in the biological studies of fruit flies and their parasites in Hawaii, as indicated in the list of publications given below, in which he was author or joint author. His associates early came to recognize the care and thoroughness with which he recorded the facts as he found them. His year by year study of the control of the Mediterranean Fruit Fly by its several imported parasites, showing the periodic fluctuations covering a long period of time, constitutes an unbroken record of great value. These records have also shown, in elaborate detail, the exact extent of control exerted by the parasites and the degree of infestation occurring in the quantities of fruit, in great variety, which he examined. Few outside his office realize the immense amount of field and laboratory work accomplished to form a basis for these papers.

Mr. Willard's work necessarily kept him closely confined to the Honolulu Station, with little opportunity for travel, excepting during short vacations. However in 1934 he went to American Samoa, where he spent three months investigating fruit flies and other economic insects for the Federal Bureau.

He was a member of The Entomological Society of America; The American Association of Economic Entomologists; The Hawaiian Academy of Science and The Hawaiian Entomological Society. He served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Hawaiian Entomological Society for two periods, totaling seven years, and was President during 1926.

Mr. Willard is survived by his son, H. F. Willard, Jr.

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CO-AUTHORSHIP

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